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INFO RHEHOND/DIR ONDCP WASHINGTON DC
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RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//SCJ2/SCJ3/SCJ5//
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF STATE AIR WING PATRICK AFB FL

UNCLAS BOGOTA 001571

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR INL/LP AND INL/RM
DEPT FOR WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [SENV](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCISCO PATINO FONSECA ASSUMED DIRAN LEADERSHIP ON MAY 6, 2009

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 6, 2009, Colonel Francisco Patino Fonseca (promotable in June to Brigadier General) became the Director of DIRAN (Antinarcotics Section of the Colombian National Police-CNP), taking over from Brigadier General Alvaro Caro Melendez. COL Patino faces challenges such as ensuring a smooth nationalization of assets, achieving manual and aerial eradication goals, and continuing to battle narcoterrorism in Colombia in the face of diminishing resources. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) On May 6, Colonel Francisco Patino Fonseca became the Director of DIRAN, leading a force of 7,250 men and women in eradication, ports and airports, interdiction, drug demand prevention, aviation, and administration sections. COL Patino has 20 years of in the police, including antinarcotics, where he has worked as a pilot, commander of Bogota's aerial base, chief of DARE, chief of eradication of illegal substances, and deputy director of DIRAN. He has also worked as a deputy commander in Bogota's metropolitan police, as police attach in Spain, and as director of VIP protection. In 2002, NAS Bogota funded COL Patino's attendance at the year-long Command and General Staff College at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), Fort Benning, Georgia. COL Patino is married and has two children; he speaks basic English.

¶3. (SBU) COL Patino's biggest tasks during his tenure will be to ensure a smooth nationalization of assets, aurally eradicate 100,000 hectares and manually eradicate 70,000 hectares of coca, and protect 44 million Colombians from narcoterrorism. The constrained fiscal environment in Colombia and diminishing USG support will limit DIRAN operations compared to previous years.

¶4. (SBU) COL Patino replaced Brigadier General Alvaro Caro Melendez. During BG Caro's tenure, the DIRAN broke records in marijuana and cocaine seizures, eradication, capture of High Value Targets, and destruction of laboratories used to process cocaine. BG Caro was promoted to Inspector General of the CNP, becoming third-in-charge of the CNP behind the Director of the CNP General Oscar Naranjo and Deputy Director of the CNP General Rafael Parra. BG Caro will be responsible for internal and disciplinary investigations of CNP personnel.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: In initial meetings Colonel Patino commented that he wanted to focus on NAS-DIRAN cooperation, although with nationalization advancing and USG financial support decreasing, the GOC's expectations will have to be tempered. Fiscal realities will likely hamper Colonel Patino's ability to affect changes and even

accomplish the goals already set out for this calendar year. U.S. support to the CNP's air mobility will continue to play a central role in DIRAN eradication, interdiction, and humanitarian operations. Without the air assets, the GOC could not sufficiently and quickly project force or provide government presence. Colombia has made great strides in nationalizing aviation assets, and we will continue to push for more, but the CNP still needs continued U.S. assistance to maintain current levels of interdiction and eradication. END COMMENT.

NICHOLS